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CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS

Andrew Abbott
Arthur S. Alderson
Jeffrey A. Alexander
Karl L. Alexander
Melanie Archer
Christopher Birkbeck
Judith R. Blau
Kenneth A. Bollen
Craig Calhoun
John L. Campbell
Lee Clarke
Lewis A. Coser
Barbara Entwisle
Doris R. Entwisle
Mary L. Fennell
Gary Alan Fine
Linda K. George
Wendy Griswold
Anne-Marie Guillemard
Jeremy Hein
Gary LaFree
Pamela E. Oliver
Trond Petersen
J. R. Porter
Martin Rein
Barbara Rosein
James F. Short, Jr.
John Walton
R. E. Washington

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Author(s): Charles Jaret
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RECENT NEO-MARXIST URBAN ANALYSIS

Charles Jaret

Department of Sociology, Georgia State University, Atlanta, Georgia 30303

BASIC ORIENTATION

Despite Castells's (1976a,b,c) critique of the concept of "urban" and his call for a major reformulation of the subfield, many of the phenomena and issues studied by conventional urban researchers are also central to neo-Marxist urban research. These are studied with different analytical concepts, and often new results are produced; but as will be shown, there are also areas of agreement and convergence with conventional work. Neo-Marxist urbanists are critical of studies done by others, especially when the city or some aspect of it is viewed as separate from and independent of the larger society, when urban problems are viewed as discrete isolated phenomena, or when certain urban forms or processes are considered inevitable or universal. According to the neo-Marxists, conventional urban social science explains urban phenomena only partially, failing to identify fundamental causes. For example, a conventional explanation of US urban growth (Borchert 1967) emphasizes two factors, major changes in technology and population migrations, as principal causes of urban structural change. In a neo-Marxist analysis, however, these are not the underlying causes but instead are intermediate factors produced by something more fundamental, the basic requirements and social relations of capitalist production. In a neo-Marxist interpretation, important technological innovations, mass migration, and the urban transformations that accompanied them are all explained as results of capitalists' need for a large, cheap, easily controlled labor force and ever increased production.

Another difference between conventional and neo-Marxist urban sociology lies in the latter's stress on the importance of class conflict. Conventional sociologists have emphasized urban communities' complex division of labor, which differentiates the population into interest groups, vocational types, and

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status communities each with their own experiences, viewpoints, and goals. Some have described urban social structure as a "mosaic of social worlds" and analyzed the social organization of urban ethnic, lifestyle, and social-class subcultures, neighborhoods, or communities of limited liability (Gans 1962; Suttles 1968; Wrobel 1979; Hunter & Suttles 1972). To the extent that urban conflict has been studied by conventional sociologists, the focus has been on internal community conflicts, conflict between neighborhoods and city governmental agencies (e.g. urban renewal), or conflict between a community and a specific institution (e.g. business or university) said to infringe upon or harm it. Typically, urban conflict has not been interpreted mainly in class terms or as an inherent part of the city's nature under capitalism; instead it is said to arise from discrimination and racism, poor administrative or political organization, cultural differences, or competition for scarce resources.

In contrast, neo-Marxists see urban conflict and problems as built into the capitalist system, originating in the contradictions and limitations of capitalism, which may be temporarily managed but not eliminated until a new mode of production is in force. Although neo-Marxists usually go beyond a simple capitalist-proletariat dichotomy, they view the essential social cleavage as between those who control the work process and extract profit from it and those who are subordinated paid workers. Other social ties and lines of cleavage, such as those based on ethnicity, lifestyle, and common territory, are seen as complicating factors, sometimes consistent with and other times cross-cutting and overshadowing the more fundamental class cleavages and conflicts. The urban complex is understood as the field in which inherent conflicts between classes and class fractions are played out. Capitalists attempt to construct an urban environment that allows for efficient production and distribution of goods and services, profitable investments, and for continuous reproduction of a disunited but reliable workforce. The working classes struggle to protect or create their own community forms and have better living conditions and amenities. It is in this context that the physical and social structure of the city and urban plans and policies are interpreted.

Urban planning itself is a subject on which conventional work and neo-Marxist work disagree. Early sociologists like Park and Wirth saw urban planning as a constructive, rational, objective attempt at solving urban problems, and they favored a comprehensive metropolitan approach. Contemporary sociologists, like Gans (1968a) or Karp et al (1977), have been much more critical of traditional urban planning, finding that it is based on too narrow a set of values and goals and a misguided notion of physical determinism. However, even these critics of planning see it as potentially capable of solving urban problems. Most neo-Marxists analyze urban planning as a technical methodology that obfuscates class interests and is "necessary to the ruling class in order to facilitate accumulation and maintain social control in the face of class

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conflict" (Fainstein & Fainstein 1979:382). They see urban planning as an attempt to manage and depoliticize urban problems that arise from capitalism's contradictions, with programs and devices that merely move problems around or create new ones. Planners' efforts to work in the interests of the poor and their programs based on "citizen participation" are dismissed as cooptive and ineffectual excercises that ritually legitimize decisions made against the interests of those people (Smith 1979b; Coit 1978). (For a neo-Marxist interpretation less extreme in its critique of planning, see Fainstein & Fainstein 1979.)

What distinguishes neo-Marxist urban analysis from most conventional work is that instead of viewing urban structure and problems as caused by population size, density, and heterogeneity (Wirth 1938), physical design (Jacobs 1961), transportation and technological change (Vernon 1966), poverty (Gans 1968b), or some peculiar "urban" social processes (Milgram 1970; Suttles 1968), neo-Marxists see them as mainly the product of the capitalist mode of production. It attempts to discover the relationships between the urban complex and society's dominant mode of production. Consistent with other contemporary Marxist theorists (Burawoy 1977:12), neo-Marxist urbanists often argue that the social relations of production have primacy and that the forces of production and the urban environment itself are used to reproduce capitalist social relations.

Fischer (1978) regards traditional urban sociology as "concerned with the relationship between settlement patterns and the 'moral order,' that is between characteristics of localities (towns and neighborhoods) and the nature of social life in those places," and he (Fischer 1976) classifies conventional work on the nature of urban social life as having either "determinist," "compositional," or "subcultural" theoretical premises. Neo-Marxist urban analysis does not admit the relationship between locality characteristics and social life as a central research issue and it does not fit into one of Fischer's categories, largely because it grants much more causal significance to the capitalist mode of production than it does to community type. Alienation, impersonality, individualism, and fragmented social relations, which "determinists" claim are produced by demographic variables, are attributed by the neo-Marxists to specific features of capitalism. The creation, retention, and defense of community and the cohesive neighborhoods and social networks touted by "compositionalists" are, in neo-Marxist work, said to be expressions of working-class solidarity, protective mechanisms against the harshness of the market system, or a logical response to the commodification of living space (Harvey 1973; Cox 1981). The culturally distinctive social worlds that "subcultural" theory sees as the consequence of the size and ecological features of a city are, in neo-Marxist theory, often attributed to capitalists' attempts to maintain a disunited labor force or to the structural divisions in the organization of work under capitalism. Of the three approaches, however, it is believed that the

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subcultural is the most compatible with a neo-Marxist position (Pickvance 1978).

As Edel (1981) notes, there are important differences in how Marxist urbanists link and explain urban phenomena with the mode of production.[1] He suggests that when neo-Marxists explain urban phenomena as a result of capitalist economic processes (e.g. explaining high urban unemployment and weak tax base by corporate mobility and disinvestment patterns) their analysis can be rather similar to that found in some conventional urban ecology and economics. Neo-Marxist analysis is more original, he claims, when it interprets urban phenomena as either *(a)* elements and/or outcomes of specific conflicts of interest between classes or class fractions, or *(b)* necessary or useful for the maintenance of the capitalist system (though logical problems similar to those facing functionalism arise here). Sawers (1975) illustrates both of these approaches. He links all the factors conventionally used to explain US metropolitan growth (transportation technology, industrial decentralization, rising affluence, population increase, and the role of government) to the economic interests of the capitalist class and the logic and functional needs of capitalism. He contends that "urban form flows out of and must remain consistent with the basic economic structure of the society" and holds that urban communities in socialist societies are significantly different because of their different mode of production. This claim has prompted much debate (Castells 1977; Szelyni 1978).

Aware of problems in specifying aspects of urbanization directly determined by a given mode of production, and aware of variation in urban phenomena in capitalist societies, Fainstein & Fainstein (1979) have outlined a model explaining how urban development is constrained but not determined by the capitalist mode of production. Their model suggests that *(a)* structural factors found in capitalist social relations of production, *(b)* specific functional requirements of capitalism, and *(c)* technological capabilities create tendencies in urban development, but these can vary or be modified by factors such as a society's earlier urban solutions and forms or its particular institutional arrangements for maintaining class privileges.

Castells (1977) uses Althusser's concept of mode of production, and the link he makes between it and urban development differs from that of other neo-Marxists. The "urban question" he investigates is the crisis in the production,

[1]There has been much debate over the concept of mode of production and its utility in explaining features of a society (Edel 1981). Harvey (1973) feels that mode of production is too broad and ambiguous a term to permit precise explanation of urbanism, and he prefers another concept, the "mode of social, political, and economic integration." Others argue that level of production is more useful. In general the neo-Marxist urban analysis considered here holds that the mode of production does not narrowly determine urban phenomena but instead sets up conditions and structures that constrain it.

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distribution, and management of the means of collective consumption (facilities and programs of mass education, housing, health, and transportation), along with crises in urban social order and local urban finance (Castells 1976e, 1978a). For Castells, the facilities and processes of collective consumption are the organizational base of the urban community. His theory and data argue that as a result of capitalism's structural and historical tendencies and contradictions (e.g. concentration and centralization of capital, uneven regional development, a tendency towards a declining rate of profit and counter-balancing mechanisms, the evolution of productive forces, and the growing power of labor movements), expanded collective consumption has become essential. However, for Castells (1978a:42) a fundamental contradiction in advanced capitalism is that although expansion of the collective means of consumption is required by capital for adequate reproduction of the labor force and is demanded by the masses, they are generally unprofitable and therefore underprovided by private enterprise. To resolve this problem the State becomes involved in the production, distribution, and management of the collective means of consumption. Its role has grown larger, and this involvement markedly affects the living conditions, social interaction, and physical form of urban communities. Castells holds that rather than solving problems State actions only exacerbate them and provoke new crises. Among other things, by socializing the costs of production and reproduction but leaving profits in private hands and ultimately having to assure capital accumulation, and by making collective consumption an issue of political debate and conflict, the State in capitalist society sets the course for expanding city budgets, fiscal crisis, retrenchment, and urban social protest movements.

The principal unifying element in recent neo-Marxist urban analysis is the interpretation of urban structure, processes, and problems in capitalist societies as shaped by and rooted in the capital accumulation process. Although other key concepts and processes are significant, there is agreement on the centrality of the capital accumulation process in understanding urbanization. Of course, many conventional urbanists also regard aspects of capital accumulation (e.g. economic growth, pursuit of profit, actions of corporations) as having important urban consequences. Neo-Marxists differ from them in analyzing processes of capital accumulation as laden with structural contradictions. As indicated below, Marxists see capitalism as having problematic prerequisites, intrinsic flaws, and self-disorganizing tendencies (Dear & Scott 1981) that provoke crises. Neo-Marxists see these contradictions and the efforts to overcome them, as much as simple pursuit of profit and economic growth, as affecting urban phenomena. Aware that cities existed long before capitalism, much neo-Marxist work is in accord with classical sociological thought in viewing conditions and relationships in early cities as vital to the emergence of capitalism. In the neo-Marxist perspective, once capitalism was established as the

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dominant mode of production, the needs and contradictions of different forms of capital accumulation became the primary molders and shapers of urbanization and urban life.

Capital Accumulation and the Urban Complex

In the Marxian sense, capital accumulation results from the production of surplus value (Pickvance 1976a:17). It results in an increase in the generalized wealth held by a small minority of people controlling the means of production and the labor of workers (Edel 1981:22). The drive for capital accumulation and the need to expand the basis for profit is understood to be an inherent, persistent, and essential characteristic of the capitalist mode of production, for reasons summarized by Edel (1981:30–32). Hill (1977:41) links this to urban development: "Since the process of capital accumulation unfolds in a spatially structured environment, urbanism may be viewed provisionally as the particular geographical form and spatial patterning of relationships taken by the process of capital accumulation." Although a capitalist system requires economic growth to survive, capital accumulation does not occur automatically or smoothly. Maintenance of an expanding capital accumulation process requires (Hill 1977): *(a)* fixed investment of part of the surplus product in new means of production; *(b)* production and distribution of articles of consumption to sustain and reproduce the labor force; *(c)* stimulation of an effective demand for the surplus product; and *(d)* additional capital formation through ever-increasing product innovation, market penetration, and economic expansion. However, numerous problems, imbalances, and contradictions can disrupt, undermine, or create a crisis in the capital accumulation process.[2] Capitalists, individually and collectively, attempt to maintain and expand this process by overcoming these obstacles and managing its crises. This involves them in a complex set of political and social relationships with the State and other social classes, and a variety of factors determine the extent of their success or failure. From this point of view, the urban built environment, its processes of change, and the social relationships that develop in it are direct and indirect results of the accumulation process or the imbalances and contradictions associated with it. The urban system is, from a neo-Marxist perspective, a "production site, a

[2]The main contradictions in the accumulation process, aside from the social nature of production and private appropriation of profit, are listed by Edel (1981): profit squeeze, underconsumption, diminishing revenue and rising rents, fiscal and reproduction crises, disproportionality, and the falling rate of profit. Harvey (1978b) provides another formulation. For most of these a large literature exists debating whether the alleged contradiction is real and, if so, whether it is important. Neo-Marxist urbanists differ in which one or more of these contradictions they emphasize, but it is their view of capital accumulation as a contradictory process that distinquishes them from conventional social scientists.

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locale for the reproduction of the labor force, a market for the circulation of commodities and the realization of profit, and a control center for these complex relationships" (Hill 1977:41). Neo-Marxist urbanists often emphasize one or another of these aspects of the urban system. This perspective also recognizes that the capital accumulation and urbanization processes are influenced by political-legal and cultural factors that contribute to cross-societal variation.

The most sophisticated and compelling theory of capital accumulation and urban development is that of Harvey (1978b). He conceives of a capitalist urban system as a physical infrastructure for commodity production, circulation, exchange, and consumption and as a resource system for the reproduction of labor power. He explains the development process of an urban system as the product of *(a)* fluctuating waves of investment in three "circuits" of capital in response to inherent contradictions and crises in the accumulation process, and *(b)* the dynamics of class struggle. While urban forms and growth processes are viewed as temporarily successful means of furthering capital accumulation, the theory holds that the urban built environment itself creates contradictions that eventually straitjacket capital accumulation. Much of it must then be destroyed and rebuilt to open up fresh room for accumulation, an outcome based on structural conditions that better urban planning or other reforms cannot avoid.

THEORY AND RESEARCH

In this section I compare three neo-Marxist analysts of US urban development, Gordon, Hill, and Mollenkopf, both with each other and with conventional urban sociologists. I seek to clarify certain areas of convergence and disagreement. These neo-Marxists were chosen because all three address the same urban phenomena, those of US urban development, but illustrate different types of neo-Marxist interpretation. They apply different Marxian concepts and elements in their analysis; and their work, while important and widely cited, has been less frequently discussed than that of scholars like Castells and Harvey. Most importantly, their work represents a particularly good balance between theoretical sophistication and empirical research directed at central issues of urban sociology.

Urban Development: Three Neo-Marxist Perspectives

The analyses of Gordon, Hill, and Mollenkopf are similar in several respects. All take the capital accumulation process as fundamental to the development of urban America. All view the US economy as having gone through three stages of capital accumulation and three corresponding stages of urban development,

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each with its own type of urban spatial form and social structure reflecting the period's capital accumulation dynamics.[3] A distinctive aspect of Gordon's work is his theory that transition from one stage to another results from instability in the accumulation process, primarily due to problems of class control in production, with changes in urban form an outgrowth of class struggle between capitalists and workers (Gordon 1978:28). Gordon is a leading exponent of the idea that modern urban form is a product of industrial capitalists' and large corporations' need to control the production process tightly and keep workers in a relatively powerless position. His research attempts to find historical evidence of this.

While Hill and Mollenkopf give interpretations of past urban development, they are more concerned than Gordon with contemporary issues. Like Gordon, Hill stresses the role of large corporations, but he is more cognizant of the role of the State and he analyzes the modern urban fiscal crisis. Hill is less concerned than Gordon with the direct impact of class struggle or specific actors on urban form. He interprets urbanization and the structure and functioning of cities as produced by basic, general, impersonal contradictions, by "laws of motion" embedded in a capitalist economy, and by factors contained in the "accumulation model" of a given period (Hill 1977). Of these three scholars, Hill alone suggests a link between urbanization and a developing capitalist world system. While the others explicitly argue against the validity of conventional ecological and economic explanations, Hill's analysis of US urban growth is consistent with much of that work.

More so than Gordon or Hill, Mollenkopf honors the idea that the connection between the capital accumulation process and urban institutions and structure is not one of narrow economic determinism. Rejecting conventional urban economic analyses that give market explanations for urban form and process (1975:147), he also distances himself from Marxist urban analyses that assume the logic of capital accumulation and capitalist elites will successfully dominate society (1981a:321). More so than Hill's or Gordon's, Mollenkopf's analysis pays close attention to competitive urban political processes, the role of the State, and working classes' "community building" actions in shaping the urban complex.

[3]Gordon's and Hill's stages of capital accumulation and urban growth are very similar. For Gordon they are "commercial" (1780–1850), transition (1850–1870), "industrial" (1870–1900), transition (1900–1920), and "corporate" (1920 to the present); for Hill they are "mercantile" (late 1700s–1850), "industrial" (1850–1940), and "metropolitan" (post–World War II to the present). Mollenkopf periodizes US urbanization as "industrial" (1840–1900), "administrative" (1900–1940), and "post-industrial" (post–World War II to the present). Walker (1981) distinguishes a similar set of periods, which in timing and description are similar to those formulated in standard urban social science.

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19TH CENTURY INDUSTRIAL CITIES A consensus exists that the factory system and the accompanying capitalist industrialization process were the primary forces transforming US cities after the Civil War. Descriptions of the physical and social structure of the industrial city by Gordon, Hill, and Mollenkopf agree closely with those in Burgess (1925) and other standard sociological works. [Long before Burgess, Engels depicted the urban concentric model in his discussion of Manchester (Harvey 1973:132–3).] Beyond this there are several differences in focus and interpretation among these urbanists.

Gordon's research on the 19th century industrial city attempts to determine why, after initially appearing in small cities along rivers and then spreading fairly evenly, manufacturing after 1870 concentrated in a few large northern central cities. Gordon (1978:38–39) argues against the adequacy of conventional explanations based on "agglomeration economies" and other considerations of locational economics. He proposes instead that manufacturing concentrated in the largest cities because these provided an environment hostile to wage laborers' interests. He cites findings that striking factory workers in small and medium-sized cities often had the support of the newspapers, politicians, and middle classes, while in large cities in the 1870s and early 1880s these were generally opposed to wage labor's demands and strikes. Gordon interprets this difference in public opinion and support for labor as meaning that in large cities laborers could not readily resist the oppressive factory system. If that was true, then capitalist enterprises in large cities had a competitive advantage; they would be more profitable and grow more rapidly than those in smaller cities. Industrialists would concentrate their production sites in the largest US cities, and those cities would undergo explosive growth.

In contrast, neither Mollenkopf's nor Hill's account suggests this explanation for factory placement. Indeed, Gordon's evidence is slim and ignores other differences between large and small cities. A better test of Gordon's thesis than he provides would be in order and would involve measuring and correlating attitudes towards unions with city size and then examining manufacturing increase, while controlling for the effects of other variables.

Mollenkopf's analysis of the rise of the 19th century industrial city stresses a particular political institutional development. He notes that industrialization drew millions to northern cities. While the ethnic heterogeneity and geographic mobility of the immigrant industrial labor force limited its class-wide action, they did challenge the capitalist elite's control. Mollenkopf (1976:116) contends that continued urban industrial growth in the large northern cities was due largely to a political factor, the presence of political machines. These blunted and coopted immigrant working-class challenges to the economic elites and made large public investments in urban infrastructure (e.g. the transportation systems and utilities) that greatly benefited growing industries. However valid

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this proposal is for US northern cities (and Mollenkopf does not document it with much supporting evidence), alone it lacks the theoretical generality of Gordon's and Hill's ideas. It could not, for example, be used to explain 19th century industrial city growth in places like Britain where political machines did not exist. Theoretical underpinning for Mollenkopf's interpretation can be found in Katznelson's (1978) discussion of institutional sources of social control, and in general the work of these two scholars is complementary.

In contrast to the above explanations, Hill (1977) attributes the rise of the industrial cities of the Northeast and Great Lakes to their nearness to vital coal and iron resources and to good intra-regional transportation and commercial linkages established in the previous period. Unlike Gordon and Mollenkopf, Hill discusses urban hierarchy and uneven development in the 19th century, theorizing that the explosive growth of cities in the industrial core, with their powerful input demands for manufacturing, caused limited peripheral urban growth in specialized functions. In significant ways Hill's explanation is similar to that of conventional urban ecology and geography, and his account of urban growth relies greatly on Berry's (1973). It would be interesting to consider how his understanding of urban hierarchy squares with recent work on urban dominance in mainstream urban sociology (Abrahamson & DuBick 1977).

20TH CENTURY METROPOLIS While the work of Hill, Mollenkopf, and Gordon on the 19th century industrial city does not have a common focus, their analysis of the 20th century metropolis definitely does. All can be read as critiques of the urban development models of Burgess, Vernon, Banfield, and others, who give primary importance to technological innovations in transportation, communication, and production, or to population increase, rising affluence, free markets, and personal choice as the causal factors for modern urban and suburban trends. Beyond this basic commonality there are some significant differences between the three neo-Marxian urbanists.

Gordon In examining the development of the metropolis, Gordon studies the first third of this century, believing that later developments have reinforced a pattern established earlier. He seeks the causes of industrial decentralization, a central business district dominated by corporate headquarters, and suburban political fragmentation; he finds them in the crucial role played by economic dominants like manufacturers and large corporations. Gordon begins his analysis of industrial relocation to new industrial suburbs by rejecting certain conventional explanations of industrial suburbanization. He then proposes that "The great twentieth-century reversal of factory location, in short, began because corporations could no longer control their labor forces in the central

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cities" (1978:50). After 1890 large cities developed working-class neighborhoods where unions and other organizations were vigorously mobilizing in labor's interests. Gordon claims that the growing strength of workers in the large cities threatened capitalist control over production and profits. Capitalists perceived that by moving their factories out of central cities to suburban areas they could retain their discipline and advantage over workers. As evidence Gordon cites the rising number of urban industrial strikes, similar conclusions by a contemporary observer, and statements of prominent industrialists affirming that the desire to avoid labor unrest caused manufacturers to relocate outside the large cities.

Gordon completes his explanation of the emergence of the metropolis with two other points. First, the sudden growth of the central business district (CBD) as a site of office headquarters in the 1920s was not simply a function of the need for face-to-face communication, nor did it result from the availability of new construction technology. Rather, the main cause was the creation of huge monopoly corporations that needed centralized administrative headquarters to manage their decentralized production sites and other dispersed operations (1976:103–4). Second, suburban political fragmentation around large northern cities developed when decentralized manufacturers, who wanted to avoid paying central city taxes, joined the anti-annexation movement to defeat central city expansion (1978:53).

Gordon's conclusions obviously differ from those of conventional urban social science. His attention to the social relations of production in manufacturing corporations and the profit motive as central to modern urban development is a healthy antidote to the neglect of these factors in much standard work. But his evidence often seems too fragmentary and selective for causal analysis, and in arguing his case he often oversimplifies. Other neo-Marxist urbanists (Ashton 1978; Walker 1981) who are in basic agreement with Gordon on this provide more careful and balanced discussions. In addition, his analysis of industrial and corporate cities posits a dominant group of industrialists and heads of large corporations who alter urban space, but it does not recognize how capitalist class internal divisions or conflicts of interest can indirectly influence the urban complex. Fitch's (1976) analysis of early industrial decentralization from New York City is an improvement. He found that the largest manufacturing interests relocated outside the city because of their need for cheaper land, while the decision to relocate smaller industries and worker residential areas came not from industrial capitalists but from other capitalist fractions—the large banking, merchant, and real estate interests. They understood that greater profits would come from non-industrial use of central urban land, and through their influence on several zoning and planning committees they were able to force many industrial employers and the working class out of Manhattan.

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Hill Hill's (1978, 1977) analysis of the contemporary metropolis has two major concerns: *(a)* to show that metropolitan urbanization expresses two fundamental laws of motion of capitalist development—the law of increasing firm size and the law of uneven development;[4] and *(b)* to show how monopoly capitalism places a set of contradictory demands on the State, which results in its adopting policies and taking actions that lead to an urban fiscal crisis.

Regarding the law of increasing firm size, Hill (1977) theorizes that the pressure of capitalist competition causes businesses to grow and consolidate into global enterprises. Their organizational and spatial structures and relations for production, distribution, and management shape a hierarchical network of local, regional, national, and international urban centers. After observing that the creation of huge corporations alters societal economic structure and transforms major cities' downtown districts into corporate headquarter centers, which Gordon also noted, Hill describes a hierarchy of cities consisting of small local production and marketing cities, regional cities that coordinate activities of the production and marketing cities, and dominant national and world cities housing the multinational corporate headquarters that determine overall goals and policies. The existence of a large body of research on urban dominance (Abrahamson & DuBick, 1977; Schwab, 1982:ch.5) makes it fair to ask how Hill connects with it. In this case the application of a Marxist perspective adds little. Hill (1977) does not confront or argue against that body of work, his typology is primitive in comparison, and if there is something in his formulation that cannot be absorbed into the existing framework on urban hierarchies it is not readily apparent.

Hill's (1977) second thesis is that uneven urban development, or simultaneous urban growth and decay, is a spatial expression of the "law of uneven development." Examples of uneven urban development are the contrasts between metropolis and periphery, growing and stagnating regions (e.g. "Sunbelt" and "Snowbelt"), and suburb and inner city. In discussing the latter, Hill links the massive post–World War II suburbanization with the dynamics of uneven development by adopting Harvey's (1975) view. The policies that built and promoted a whole new suburban social and physical environment were undertaken to insure high commodity consumption and production in order to create a new round of opportunities for very profitable investment and

[4]Hill's (1977) "law of increasing firm size" holds that concentration and centralization of capital accumulation are intrinsic to the process of capitalist growth and that as capitalist enterprises expand they become complex, multidivision organizations with elaborate vertical chains of command. His "law of uneven development" is a product of *(a)* industrialists' "capital deepening" strategy, which created a vast supply of surplus labor, and *(b)* capitalists' freedom to invest in or move to areas where they can obtain greatest profit. It states that capitalism has a "tendency to produce unemployment as well as employment, poverty as well as wealth, underdevelopment as well as development."

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capital accumulation, averting a return to the economic problems of the Depression.

The use of the concept of uneven development has been popular among neo-Marxist urbanists, often with stimulating results. Its implication that growth in one place comes at the expense of another has been merged with dependency theory and world system theory in analyzing Third World urbanization (Roberts 1978; Walton 1982). For Lojkine (1976), uneven development is an important contradictory factor that prevents rational urban development or adequate provision of collective means of consumption. He claims it increases the underdevelopment of regions not well equipped with urban infrastructure and increases megolopolitan congestion, necessitating state intervention through urban and regional policies that only exacerbate problems. Pickvance's (1981) study of British regional development policy and London office construction policy shows that state efforts to remedy problems of uneven development actually have very different consequences.

Using the law of uneven development to understand urban phenomena, however, is controversial on at least two counts. First, there is an obvious disagreement between neo-Marxists who see uneven development as a basic outcome of the normal functioning of a capitalist system and those conventional urbanists who conclude that sustained capitalist economic growth reduces spatial or regional differences and inequalities through a "filtering" process (Berry & Kasarda 1977:280). Second, in an essay on regionalism, Markusen (1980) a Marxist urbanist, rejects the law of uneven development as it is applied here, denying that the logic of capital accumulation requires or necessarily produces uneven spatial development. Continued investigation in this area is definitely needed.

Hill's final concern and major contribution is the analysis of the large older cities' fiscal problems. His analysis, which borrows from O'Connor (1973), along with complementary work by Tabb (1978, 1982), Alcaly & Bodian (1976), Katznelson (1978), and Lichten (1980), examines contradictory relationships among state structures, dominant economic actors, and urban interest groups. These scholars have produced a neo-Marxist perspective on urban fiscal problems that differs from some conventional explanations. It holds that a city's financial problems arise from conditions beyond its boundaries and control, and that an urban fiscal crisis is an expression of class struggle.

In a monopoly corporate economy, according to this perspective, US cities' role and expenditures in two basic functions greatly expand. Large expenditures on the first function, to guarantee and facilitate the process of private capital accumulation, consist of investments in physical infrastructure designed to aid private enterprise and in human capital that raises worker productivity. Corporations and financial investments are attracted to cities or regions where large sums are spent in this manner, and cities are under pressure to increase

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this spending to retain or lure them. This requires more revenue than the city can generate by itself. Additional funds for these projects come from Federal or State levels or from borrowing. Typically, investments and projects of this nature are spatially uneven and favor the monopoly sector much more than the competitive sector of the economy. While this may cause economic growth in some places and classes, it brings unemployment, displacement, and poverty for others, which aroused the massive urban protest and rebellion so evident in the 1960s. To keep social order, city governments responded with increased spending in areas like welfare (Isaac & Kelly 1981), public employment, and public safety. This is the second function of city government: social control to mitigate or manage the consequences, contradictions, and problems that result from the capital accumulation process. In some cities public employees and welfare recipients have struggled successfully to receive larger benefits, primarily funded from city coffers. The pressure for city funds for both of these functions drives city governments to ever larger budgets and produces a "structural gap" between money on hand and expenditures. A revenue shortage occurs, it is argued, because the city "socializes" (pays for or subsidizes) the costs of the capital accumulation process but receives few of its rewards (profits). The latter are appropriated by private corporations or benefit those who live in suburbs outside the city's tax jurisdiction. The city must rely on Federal funding for ever larger parts of its budget. If Federal aid is reduced, cities must raise taxes and borrow more money, often at higher interest rates. As city expenditures on the social control function rise, pressure for a cutback builds. Taxpayers rebel, and powerful corporate and financial interests claim either that not enough city spending benefits them or that rising city borrowing hurts them. Taxpayers and businesses leave the city. The tax burden and unemployment rate of the remaining population increase, reinforcing the problem and worsening the city's budgetary crisis. Hill (1978) discusses the black political struggle in the context of urban fiscal crisis and concludes that urban fiscal problems will worsen and political conflict will intensify since structural factors prevent cities from meeting the escalating needs of private capital accumulation and the social needs of the city population. Rather than predicting a single outcome for US cities, Hill discusses several interesting urban alternative futures: the pariah city, the socialist city, and the state capitalist city, suggesting that the dominant tendency in most US cities is towards the latter.

The strengths and weaknesses of this analysis can be assessed with reference to Block's (1981) review of research on the fiscal crisis of the state. Recent events and new neo-Marxist work suggest that attempts at resolving the urban fiscal crisis are leading in directions not fully anticipated by Hill and others. Lichten (1980) found that the "solution" imposed in New York by the logic of the capital accumulation process and the power of corporate and financial capital combined severe service cutbacks and an austerity budget. Those who

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were hurt the most by it resisted little, while the capitalist class actually benefited. After observing similar outcomes in other US and British cities, Tomaskovic-Devey & Miller (1982) argue that the state's role and expenditures are being reduced, not increased, especially in social programs, by a "recapitalization of capitalism" policy that will not help cities in financial trouble. Fainstein & Fainstein (1982) discuss new developments in some fiscally troubled US cities where results unforeseen by Hill (1978) or Castells (1976e) have occurred: central city reinvestment, shifts in economic function, and gentrification, which produce an urban spatial form and social fabric resembling the European model.

Mollenkopf Most of Mollenkopf's work deals with the post–World War II era, though his research on earlier urbanization reaffirms some of Gordon's and Hill's contentions. As did Gordon, he finds evidence that early in this century and after World War II, suburban factory and residential movement was often undertaken because business executives believed they would have fewer labor problems and greater social control over production outside the cities (1981a:327; 1975:130–32). As did Hill, he accepts the idea that after World War II business leaders and policy makers feared a return to Depression conditions, and suburban development was used as a way of stimulating demand, production, and investment to create economic growth (1975:130–31). Mollenkopf (1976:117) adds another cause of industrial relocation: Dissatisfaction with the growing financial costs of dealing with city machine politicians prompted businessmen to move from the city and support reform government.

While Hill's analysis of the urban economic and social situation is based on capitalist "laws of motion" and Gordon emphasizes capital's dominance over labor, Mollenkopf's (1976) analysis stresses political factors, and his recent work diverges from that of Hill and Gordon. Mollenkopf (1981a) sees urban life as consisting of two kinds of relationships in asymmetric tension: market-based relationships of economic exchange/accumulation and nonmarket "community" relationships of mutual support and reciprocity. Though this formulation may seem reminiscent of classic ideas like Toennies', Mollenkopf's view of community relationships as emergent and nonresidual is more in line with modern urban community theorists. He proposes that urban development proceeds from the interaction of both kinds of relationships in a cycle of growth and conflict. Capitalist accumulation leads to communal and spatial forms and institutions that initially allow or promote economic growth but that eventually resist continued accumulation and threaten the system with crisis. When this happens certain elite economic actors attempt to undermine or restructure old communal and spatial forms or create new ones that will allow greater accumulation. In doing this they must confront state structures and existing orga-

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nized communities in a political struggle that, Mollenkopf says, they are not necessarily destined to win.

Mollenkopf's (1975, 1981b) empirical work supports this theory. His analysis begins after World War II, noting that older US cities were then in a fiscal crisis caused by declining industrial employment, increasing suburbanization, migration to the cities by impoverished surplus labor, and weak city government. In response to this crisis and in defense of threatened central city land values and investments, "pro-growth coalitions" of downtown businessmen, progressive mayors, planners, newspaper editors, construction unions, real estate interests, and others were assembled. With business and corporate initiative, political leadership by new pro-growth mayors, and increased local and Federal funding, this coalition launched a series of highway and urban renewal projects designed to modernize downtown areas and make the city economy grow and prosper.

The consequences of this effort, while beneficial for some interests, brought displacement, unemployment, racial conflict, neighborhood deterioration, and instability for many city residents. Mollenkopf attributes much of the urban turbulence of the 1960s to popular opposition to the projects of the pro-growth coalition that undermined longstanding communal forms. Ultimately, he claims, this opposition brought the downfall of most pro-growth mayors, halted large-scale urban renewal, and made neighborhood and community planning cliches in urban policy. His (1981b) case studies of Boston and San Francisco neighborhood opposition to "growth" projects finds that neighborhood protest organizations are communal forms that evolved into service agencies and became integrated into local urban politics. Although they won battles against urban renewal authorities, Mollenkopf says they lost the war, since trends set in motion by urban renewal (displacement and shortages of low-cost housing) have continued under the auspices of market forces and "softer" programs even after the "victories" of these community organizations. Mollenkopf holds out the hope that young affluent professionals involved in gentrification and the poor/minority residents still in these neighborhoods can form a coalition leading to a broader urban social movement that supplants market values and relationships with those of community.

Except for this proposed coalition, there is good support for Mollenkopf's contentions. His theory converges with Cox's (1981) ideas on "communal" and "commodity" orientations to urban neighborhoods. Community turmoil and protest against urban renewal and highways have been extensively documented. Haas & Heskin's (1981) research on Los Angeles neighborhood resistance to renewal produced findings similar to Mollenkopf's (1981b). Work on the "city as a growth machine" (Molotch 1976; Lyon et al 1981) suggests that, as Mollenkopf claims, urban growth is associated with a strong business community and does not typically bring lower unemployment rates or

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other substantial economic benefits to the general population. Friedland's (1980) regression analysis found that urban renewal was most extensive and most responsive to economic conditions in cities where corporate strength was high, though he claims urban renewal was more the result of a growing downtown office and retail economy than of a declining one. Boulay (1979) claims Mollenkopf errs in attributing the masterminding of Boston's renewal program to a small group of businessmen, but Mollenkopf (1981a) clearly denies that an economic elite or ruling class easily controls or mainpulates urban affairs. Some Marxist analysts (e.g. Molotch 1979) deny the significance or desirability of community-based actions, but Mollenkopf's concern with them is supported by Castells (1978a) and by much useful conventional urban sociology. Mollenkopf has produced an urban analysis that brings together elements and insights of Marxist and standard sociological thinking, and further progress along these lines will probably rely heavily on his work.

Urban Development: Additional Views

A great deal of neo-Marxist urban analysis deals with the issues and themes discussed above, based on urban systems both inside and outside the United States. In this section I review two important areas of that work: analyses of property and finance capital, and working class and community movements.

PROPERTY AND FINANCE CAPITAL Conventional urban sociology has not systematically examined the urban impact of property and finance capitalists, so the work and findings of neo-Marxist analysts here is another way that it differs from conventional urban sociology. Neo-Marxist urbanists view the unity of capitalist class interests and consciousness as a variable (Edel 1981), distinguishing several lines of cleavage within it. Important French work (Lojkine 1977b; Castells & Goddard 1974; Biarez et al 1973) is interested in the division between monopoly and nonmonopoly sectors of capital, and argues that struggles between these capitalist fractions find expression in urban policy and change, in ways that usually favor monopoly capital. More work, however, has been directed towards understanding the role of finance and property capital in urban development and its relationship with other fractions of capital and with the working classes. The dominance of commercial and industrial capital in shaping urban form and relations in earlier periods is widely acknowledged, but the idea that the hegemonic force in the modern metropolis is finance and property capital (Harvey 1974) is subject to debate.

Property capitalists, or rentiers [Molotch's (1979) term], are individual or corporate property developers, land speculators, and landlords who do not perform an economically productive function but who control the space or physical structures needed in all aspects of capitalist production. They seek to discover the needs of productive capital and to make their space more attractive

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for investment so they can profit from its rental or sale (Molotch 1979). It is worth noting that neo-Marxist urbanists disagree about an important aspect of the nature of property capital. Lemarche (1976) contends that it is a distinct fraction of capital, separate from commercial, industrial, and finance, but Boddy (1981) makes a good case for its being a branch of commercial capital. Molotch (1979) describes the rentiers not as part of the capitalist class but as intermediaries between a national capitalist class, based in large productive corporations, and local urban areas. Regardless of how they are conceived, Feagin (1982) criticizes urban sociology for ignoring the role of property capital, especially land speculators, in the development and decline of US cities. He describes cases where profit-minded real estate speculators determined site selection of cities, shaped their internal structure, and affected suburban development. In Third World cities also, urban spatial form, housing, and other urban services are strongly influenced by land speculation activities of a local upper class looking for investment avenues (Walton 1982).

In a more systematic analysis, Lemarche (1976) describes the urban planning and equipping role of property capital and the logic by which they let buildings deteriorate if they occupy locations of potential urban renewal. In many ways his analysis and Molotch's (1979) are complementary. Both emphasize that property capital seeks to maximize "differential rent," creating a neglect of working-class residential areas because greater profit lies in production of commercial, administrative, financial, or luxury housing space. They agree that this feature of the capital accumulation process is so powerful that it overcomes attempts to counter it. Lemarche rejects the idea that housing reform or city planning can do anything but reinforce the existing system, and Molotch argues that community organization and neighborhood movements cannot make basic changes in neighborhood life. Beyond neglect of working-class residential areas, Lemarche (1976) contends that the normal functioning of property capital is largely responsible for an urban housing crisis consisting of widespread displacement from neighborhoods undergoing redevelopment, physical dilapidation of much low-cost housing stock, and a shortage of dwellings at reasonable prices.

Lemarche's analysis is a deductive one based on the logic of the economic system. It considers only economic factors, without noting political factors or other variables that might be operative, and Lemarche uses only a few vague references to Montreal and Quebec to support certain points. Several neo-Marxist urbanists give better discussions of housing issues and problems in treatments that are more detailed, empirically grounded, and include a wider range of factors and variables (Stone 1972, 1980; Marcuse 1982; Pickvance 1976b). Another limitation of his work, as Pickvance notes (1976a:16), is that Lemarche does not consider contradictions within the workings of property capital or conflicts between property capital and other capitalist fractions.

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Molotch (1979) is not subject to these criticisms. He analyzes rentiers as more than economic actors, conceiving of them as participating actively in a "nested" set of competitive pro-growth coalitions along with other interested groups to promote a pro-business climate in their locale and actively to seek economic growth. This involves the rentiers in a variety of political and social relationships and activities beyond their real estate wheeling and dealing. Molotch views local urban rentiers not as a fraction of the capitalist class but as intermediary actors who, in pursuing their own interests, serve to connect the needs and decisions of a national ruling class with conditions in local areas. Thus he is keenly aware of the conflicts among rentiers as a group and between the rentiers and other fractions of capital, discussing these with illustrative case studies of urban neighborhoods.

While Lemarche and Molotch investigate how property capital stimulates commercial and industrial growth and thereby affects urban life, Harvey (1974) examines the role of property capital dealing in residential space. He argues that landlords and speculator-developers form a class at odds with several classes of housing consumers. Depending on the balance of power between the housing rentiers and housing consumers, and several other variables, rentiers can extract greater or lesser amounts of "class-monopoly" rent. Harvey (1974, 1975, 1977) describes some typical urban housing conflicts. He analyzes the Baltimore housing market, showing how local financial institutions and residential real estate operators profit by creating housing submarkets, racial transition, and high turnover. However, while housing rentiers are influential in shaping urban residential form and conditions and make large profits from it, they are not the primary source of housing policies nor the greatest beneficiaries of the system. Harvey (1974:254) argues that finance capital has become the "hegemonic force" in advanced capitalist society and that "financial institutions and government manage the urbanization process to achieve economic growth, economic stability, and to defuse social discontent" (1974:250). He argues that since the Depression US housing policy has been a means towards these ends, coordinated by national financial institutions and certain governmental agencies. These have created a system of mortgage banking, credit, and housing programs, most of which operate in ways that protect or even guaranteee the banks' profits. National programs and policies are then applied to specific urban areas by local financial institutions, with local housing rentiers serving as active intermediaries who use the housing programs' opportunities to serve their own interests.

This idea that urban development has been transformed from expressing the needs of industrialists to expressing the interests of finance capital, with the state as a regulator, is controversial. The theory of state monopoly capitalism underlying Lojkine's (1977a) work runs counter of it, and Harloe (1977) cites additional European work that disputes this thesis. Among American neo-

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Marxists Edel (1977) criticizes it, claiming that Harvey (1974) is confused about the nature and role of finance capital, portraying finance capital as a distinct, even dominant, fraction with special interests that may not coincide with those of other fractions of capital. This view suggests that financial institutions make investment decisions affecting the urban environment, in housing or other areas, with an eye towards their own profit returns. It is often associated with the view that the capitalist class is disunited and that the state works in the common interests of capital. Such a notion allows major banks to be viewed as the main villains in urban fiscal crises. Edel (1977), however, believes that today finance capital is neither an independent nor a dominant fraction; rather than having its own distinct interests, finance capital works closely with other capitalists for common interests. In this view major financial institutions are closely linked with other large capitalist enterprises, and their investment patterns are coordinated with the needs of those other capitalists.

The latter concept is supported by Ratcliff's (1980a,b) research. Comparing St. Louis banks' industrial/commercial and housing investment patterns, his results suggest that *(a)* major banks neither dominate corporations nor are they independent actors trying to maximize their own returns on investment, but rather a situation of "class coordination" exists whereby the major bankers operate in tandem with large corporations to achieve mutual interests; and *(b)* bank investment patterns differ depending on banks' ties to large corporations, with banks closely linked to major corporations doing the most disinvestment from St. Louis. Additional research (Ratcliff et al 1979) studied bankers' participation in civic policy-making bodies, with interesting results. The leading bankers and industrialists were active in civic policy-making groups, usually supporting efforts to improve the "livability" of their city and encouraging "social expenses" by the state to insure social stability. At the same time they were most likely to make economic and investment decisions that undermined the vitality of the city, disinvesting from St. Louis in favor of the sunbelt and suburbs.

Today large commercial and residential property capital, finance capital, and industrial capital are apparently not the separate or independent forces they once were, as mergers and buy-outs now make it common for corporations to be active in all areas. Many of the urban effects and conflicts described by neo-Marxist urbanists still remain, however, and continuing research will see what if any urban changes this reorganization of capital brings. A changing structure of capital has implications for working-class and community movements, which are the focus of the next section.

WORKING-CLASS AND COMMUNITY MOVEMENTS The literature reviewed here has portrayed capitalists and the accumulation process as the force behind urban growth and change, interpreting urban structure and processes in

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terms of its benefits to capitalists. Some neo-Marxist work is more attentive to the role of working-class and community movements in shaping the urban complex or as potential beneficiaries in urban struggle. It is axiomatic in Marxist theory that the central point of conflict in capitalist society "lies in the work place and is expressed in struggles over the work process and the wage rate" (Harvey 1978b:114). This has led many Marxists to treat work-based struggles as the only significant and progressive movements, often dismissing movements designed to improve housing conditions and attempts at neighborhood organizing or ethnic mobilization as misguided, parochial, and based on false consciousness.

An important contribution of Marxist urbanists like Harvey, Castells, and Lojkine has been to emphasize that a key facet of the capital-vs-labor struggle occurs outside the work site, over the reproduction of labor power (through biological and socialization processes) and provision of collective consumption (e.g. housing, transportation, education). This suggests that class struggle originating in the work process is "displaced" (Harvey, 1978b) into community living space and institutions, and these neo-Marxist urbanists attribute greater significance to community struggles than have previous Marxist analysts. Harvey (1978b:117–18) states: "The conditions of life in the community are of great import to the working class and they can therefore become a focus of struggle which can assume a certain relative autonomy from that waged in the factory. The institutions of community can be captured and put to work for working class ends. . . . The principle of community can then become a springboard for class action rather than an antidote to class struggle." A large amount of neo-Marxist analysis of urban movements touches on this thesis, with recent work indicating the great difficulties urban community movements have in either remaining viable independent forces or acting in concert with other interest groups. The *praxis* section of the *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* covers this area. Evers (1981) and Ceccarelli (1982) discuss European urban social movements and research, the latter trying to explain their dramatic decline since the mid-1970s. I review additional work here.

Using observations on urban development and struggle in Britain and the United States, Harvey (1976) sketches the three-way conflict among *(a)* labor in its living space seeking decent, inexpensive housing, transportation, public facilities, and neighborhood amenities, *(b)* property and finance capital, and *(c)* construction capitalists, both seeking profit from the production and use of those elements. This results in "a fight over the costs and conditions of existence in the living place" in which community movements and organizations arise and engage in rent strikes, zoning battles, squatting, riots, or protest against red-lining, highways, or urban renewal. Harvey (1976) then argues that these "urban" struggles conceal deeper class struggles since the ultimate

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outcome of these conflicts is of great importance to "capital in general" if its dominance over the working classes is to continue. He suggests that capital in general becomes involved in these struggles, usually through state actions, but often it apparently intervenes on the side of working-class community groups. Harvey (1976) specifies four ways that capital in general has intervened in urban community struggles: *(a)* promoting homeownership; *(b)* attempting to lower costs of basic commodities required to reproduce labor power (e.g. housing or food); *(c)* encouraging and managing high levels of "rational" individual and collective consumption; and *(d)* propagating views and values toward life, work, and nature that socialize people to the capitalist system. He contends that each of these may involve gains for portions of the working class; however, usually they represent reforms that are even more beneficial to capital in general and help preserve its dominance. He argues that progressive urban movements must go from competitive community consciousness to class consciousness. A lack of clarity about the identity and operation of capital in general detracts from an otherwise stimulating and controversial theory that should provide fertile grounds for further research.

Edel (1981) speaks to Harvey's theory and others reviewed above. He prefers a theory that does not link specific urban developments or phenomena so tightly to the needs and actions of capitalists or the laws of the accumulation process. Rather, in any historic situation he sees alternative urban forms and outcomes as compatible with capitalist accumulation, but some alternatives are more beneficial or harmful to working classes. Edel suggests that working-class movements' pressure and political action can determine which alternative emerges, and he urges careful study of specific urban developments to support this thesis. Using this perspective Edel (1977, 1981) adds to the neo-Marxist suburbanization theories. Rather than explaining suburbanization as a solution imposed by industrial capitalists to divide or weaken workers, or as a reflection of uneven development, or as a means to avert a return to Depression conditions, Edel contends that working-class political movements actually sought inexpensive suburban housing and low transportation fares, rejecting alternatives like company towns or more tenements. Edel asserts that for a portion of the working class suburbanization meant an improvement in living standard; but in contrast to Europe, where suburban workers often resided in cooperative housing and maintained strong working-class political organizations, the US pattern of single-family suburban dwellings helped weaken working-class political organization. On this Edel's analysis agrees with Harvey's (1976), and they also agree that urban community-based struggles must be coordinated or linked to workers' movements if real gains are to be made.

Castells (1976d, 1978a,b) has made the analysis of urban social movements a central part of his work. He believes that urban community movements

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develop as a popular response to the state's inability to resolve problems of collective consumption, and that urban movements can unify various classes and social strata against the dominant interests of capital. His early work, consisting of an elaborate conceptual framework and exploratory analysis of factors related to different effects of French urban social movements, is a marked departure from conventional sociological analysis of social movements. It and related work by Olives (1976) has been criticized by Pickvance (1975b, 1977b), who suggests a neo-Marxist approach to urban social movements that is closer to standard sociological work. In recent work on urban community movements (Castells & Murphy 1982), a spatial analysis of San Francisco's gay community, Castells's earlier approach is not apparent. The recent work uses concepts and techniques common in standard urban social science.

The neo-Marxist study of urban social movements is an exciting area of research. It probably is the area that has gone farthest in integrating concepts and approaches of Marxist and non-Marxist social science. Walton & Salces (1979), for example, bring together the theories of Castells and Harvey, as well as some conventional urban sociological methods and concepts, in analyzing Chicago Latino movements as responses to contradictions in collective consumption, production, and political processes.

CONCLUSIONS

In contemporary neo-Marxist urban theory and research we find a coherent macrosociological approach that speaks to central issues of urban social science, has narrowed the theory-research gap (Smith 1979b), makes some important contributions, and can fruitfully be integrated with works of conventional urban sociology. Grounding its explanation of urbanization and urban life in the processes, needs, and contradictions of capital accumulation, it offers a framework and hypotheses that merit consideration, particularly with comparative research. The distinctive and most significant contributions of this body of work appear to me to be *(a)* its analysis of how urban community and neighborhood conflicts and problems are interconnected with issues of class conflict and collective consumption; *(b)* its interpretation of urban fiscal problems and crises; *(c)* the emphasis placed on the process of uneven development and its implications for urban and regional change; *(d)* its analyses of the influence of finance and property capital on the urban environment. Claims that a neo-Marxist perspective is the only scientific approach to the study of urban phenomena, or that its concepts and concerns take in all significant areas of inquiry, are, to say the least, overstatements. However, given the lack of progress by conventional urban social science in developing either a unified

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approach to urban phenomena or analyses that transcend disciplinary boundaries, and given its abundance of disconnected middle-range theories, a neo-Marxist perspective may be a useful starting point for renewed thinking about urban phenomena and policies.

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